8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RHl Caucasia RHl

fire in the hearth is extinguished, and the future bride and groom must clasp hands as a concluding betrothal ceremony.[6] Only now do the negotiations regarding the *kalym* begin.[7] 584

The NORTHEASTERN CAUCASIANS. Instead of describing the customs of each Chechen tribe individually, we shall present the engagement customs of the most primitive of Chechen tribes, the Ingushi. The father of the suitor visits the family of the prospective bride personally.[8] Stereotyped procedure is the rule, and he is fully aware of this observance. At the first and second visit the girl's family is obliged by etiquette to make excuses, and by no means may a decision be reached. At the third visit the girl's father will utter his long awaited consent. The matchmakers may never visit the bride's father empty-handed. Usually they bring a ram to treat the family to a little dinner and to create a friendly atmosphere for the discussion regarding the marriage. If for some reason or other the marriage be considered undesireable, etiquette demands that an outright refusal be avoided; instead, the girl's family must demand an excessive *kalym* or make other impossible stipulations. If the father of the girl has given his consent, a betrothal feast must be prepared,[9] on which occasion the suitor presents his future wife with an engagement gift of Rs. 10 and a silk cloth.[10] The local mullah is then called and a formal engagement contract is drawn before the usual two witnesses.[11] Two or three months later, the date of the marriage is agreed upon. Once the couple is officially engaged, the entire *taipan* becomes extremely interested in them, doing them all sorts of favours.

In Leontovič's *adat* collection we find another form of matchmaking. A brother is obliged to arrange a marriage between his sister and a friend who has "drunk to her health and offered her brother a gift." A failure to carry out this obligation will turn an intimate friend into the bitterest foe, and rightly so, says the *adat*, because such a neglect is a serious crime, a blood-offense, which necessarily calls for revenge no less than does murder.[12] This means of arranging a marriage is very rare and resorted to by the North Caucasians, especially the Ingushi, only after a refusal.[13] This *adat* is especially interesting because it overrules the sacred, inviolable *patria potestas* and so many other *adats* regarding choice of mates and engagement. This may very well be a vestige of a right formerly enjoyed by the maternal uncle.[14] [628] [604]

---

[6] *ibid.*

[7] *ibid.* The engagement customs of the Abkhaz have been described quite fully by Seidlitz in his "Die Abchasen," *Globus*, LXVI (1894), p. 40.

[8] In Salati, Aukh, and Ichkeria matchmakers arrange the marriage ("Sbornik adatov žitelej Nagornago Okruga, 1864 goda," Leontovič, II, p. 144, § 92).

[9] Jakovlev, *Ingući*, pp. 50 f.

[10] Berže, *Čečnja i Čečency*, p. 97.

[11] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka Ingulevskago Okruga," SSKG, III (1870), p. 20.

[12] Leontovič, II, pp. 251, §§ 149, 151; Berže, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 427.

[13] Leontovič, II, p. 251, § 151.

[14] Cf. Kovalevskij, "La Famille matriarcale au Caucase," *L'Anthropologie*, IV (1893), pp. 271 f.

8: Lužbetak E-4 (no date) 1951 RH1 Caucasia RH1

(6) The *maternal uncle* appears on the scene in marriage and family affairs as an important figure. A special part of the bride price (*madi-arvadai-kal*) of the Ossetes is reserved for the maternal uncle.[56] Among the Ingushi and a number of other tribes in North Caucasia, if someone drinks to the health of his friend's sister and then gives him a present, the friend is obliged to arrange a marriage between his sister and his friend, otherwise a blood-feud will be the result. This custom, as we have said, overrules even the inviolable *patria potestas* and all the *adats* regarding the choice of mates. It is, as it were, an acceptance of the bride price by the brother ("maternal uncle") without handing the bride over to the purchaser.[57] Moreover, an Ingush lad, after reaching the age when he is allowed to carry arms, has a right to a special present from his maternal uncle. In fact, the youth may go and steal the present with impunity, because he has a *right* to it.[58] This, I think, may very easily be a vestige of a former inheritance rule through the maternal uncle.[59] The Khevsur orphan automatically falls to the guardianship of the maternal uncle.[60] Kovalevskij conjectures that the Georgian institution known as *tsatsali*[61] may be a vestige of the custom to adopt a maternal uncle.[62]

Kovalevskij, Post and other ethnologists of the 19th century "found" an astoundingly large number of "undeniable" vestiges of a former matriarchal culture in the Caucasus. Any custom that would fit into the false principle "mater certa, pater incertus" was "infallibly" a matriarchal vestige. Thus the *atalyk*,[63] the taboos forbidding a father to carry his own child, the prohibition for anyone to ask about the health of another person's wife or child, etc.[64] were all "vestiges" of former matriarchy. The Cherkess *tleush*[65] and the Ingush *taipa*[66] were likewise "vestiges." Kovalevskij's article "La famille matriarcale au Caucase"[67] is a typical example of the matriarchy mania under which the scientists of the past century laboured. Every now and then they would come across a true vestige or a possible indication of matriarchy or mother-right, and these we have incorporated in the present work. The other "vestiges" we have rejected and offered other, more plausible explanations and interpretations.

Russian interest in the problem of mother-right has again been revived. The Russian ethnologist maintains that matriarchy was universal at one time: it was a stage through which all civilizations had to pass, while patriarchy is only

---

[56] *Supra*, p. 87.

[57] *Supra*, p. 101. A Berže, Čečnja i čečency, p. 98; Leontovič, II, pp. 251 f, § 149; Kovalevskij, "La famille matriarcale au Caucase," *L'Anthropologie*, IV (1893), pp. 271 f.

[58] Jakovlev, *Ingushi*, p. 47.

[59] This seems to be a genuine vestige.

[60] Kovalevskij, *op. cit.*, p. 273. The maternal uncle also plays an important part in the Khevsurian blood-feuds (Hahn, *Aus dem Kaukasus*, p. 273).

[61] *Supra*, p. 182.

[62] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*

[63] *Supra*, p. 57.

[64] *Supra*, pp. 149 f, 162—167.

[65] *Supra*, p. 55.

[66] *Supra*, p. 84.

[67] *L'Anthropologie*, IV (1893), pp. 259—278. See also Kovalevskij's *Zakon*, I, pp. 3—27.